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**Inclusion of Children of Immigrants
from Mexico in the California ECE System**

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Bachelor Thesis: UTVK03, 15 hp
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Abstract

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This thesis will critically analyze the extent of inclusion and exclusion among young children of immigrants from Mexico to the the United States in the California Early Childhood Education System (ECE), commonly referred to as preschool. It will analyze inclusion based on the public ECE program, Head Start. Using secondary analysis, it studies how Head Start has been successful in promoting inclusion among children of Mexican immigrants, and the barriers and challenges which children of immigrants face in regards to inclusion. A theoretical framework of inclusion and incorporation, with an emphasis on cultural diversity is provided as the basis for analysis. This thesis concludes that the state, through Head Start, has fostered inclusion among children of immigrants through the promotion of certain policies and program designs. However, the extent of these inclusion efforts do not provide for the numerous barriers faced by children of immigrants. There is a lack of immigrant-specific policies which aim to encourage inclusion and cultural diversity. Children of immigrants face greater challenges than do children of natives in regards to accessing, and profiting from the potential benefits of ECE.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, ECE, Immigration, Social Policies, Head Start, Inclusion

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to Area of Research

This thesis aims to critically analyze the inclusion and exclusion of children of immigrants from Mexico to the US within the Early Childhood Education (ECE) system in California. The ECE system refers to formal center-based care, and early education for children ages 3-4 in the United States. The population of study are children of immigrants; those who are foreign-born and those born in the US, who have at least one foreign born parent. This thesis looks specifically at children of immigrants from Mexico. Further distinctions can be found in section 1.3 entitled definitions.

ECE has become a prominent feature in today's education system. Research has shown ECE programs to provide cognitive, social, physical, short term and long term gains to children when held in comparison to those not enrolled in formal ECE programs (Karoly and Gonzalez, 2011). Impacts of ECE extend beyond the individual, affecting families and communities at large. ECE has been discussed as a tool for 'leveling the playing field' of the underprivileged when readily affordable, available and high in quality, with the potential to diminish some of the existing social and economic gaps.

Over 50 percent of young children in the US today, under the age of six are children of immigrants. Accordingly, issues related to immigrant inclusion are politically and socially relevant, and policies relating to immigrant inclusion have far reaching consequences. Inclusion in ECE among immigrants is an issue which affects millions of children, families, and the society at large.

The state plays a pivotal role in inclusion among immigrant children in ECE programs. Social policies can help or hinder inclusion. Public programs, such as Head Start, which target low-income families, aim to provide ECE to those deemed eligible by ways of means testing. While certain policies have worked to include children of immigrants, structural and bureaucratic obstacles limit the extent to which inclusion can take place. Besides these obstacles, children of Mexican immigrants face a number of other barriers which hinder their ability to access or fully utilize the ECE system.

Incorporation of immigrants into various sectors of society plays a large role in the power relations between immigrants and the state. Immigrants abilities and opportunities are impacted by these power relations. Exclusion from societal institutions can reinforce harmful power relations and foster segregation. Inclusion of children of Mexican immigrants into the California ECE system is one way in which immigrants can be included in society. It is important to analyze the ways in which inclusion has been achieved, and the barriers which immigrants face to attaining it.

1.2 Aim of Thesis

The thesis aims to explore the following research question:

In which ways are children of immigrants from Mexico included in, and excluded from, the ECE system in California?

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the extent to, and ways in which, children of immigrants from Mexico are included in, or excluded from, the ECE system in California. This thesis will answer this question by analyzing how the state works to include immigrants through examining a specific public program, Head Start. Head Start is a federally funded program whose goal is to enhance cognitive, social and emotional development in children from birth to age five by providing education, health, nutrition and social services to children and their families (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2013) . The thesis will examine ways in which the state program has been successful in immigrant inclusion, and then analyze the existing barriers that hinder immigrant inclusion in the California ECE system.

Existing research has explored the potential of ECE to both benefit individuals and their families, and to contribute to macro-level positive impacts in society. However, research relating to children of immigrants in ECE based on ethnic background is lacking (Takanishi 2004: p. 73). Using the existing research concerning: numbers of children of immigrants, the value of ECE, migration issues faced by immigrants, and the role of the state social policies, this study will contribute to research that analyzes the inclusion and exclusion of children of immigrants in the ECE system by studying the case of children of Mexican immigrants in California.

1.3 Definitions

Because various and even competing definitions exist, it is necessary to properly define the following keywords in order to fully understand the forthcoming arguments and information. In this thesis, the population in question is referred to as 'children of immigrants' or 'immigrant children'. This thesis uses the definition provided by both Karoly and Gonzalez (2011) and Matthews and Ewen (2006) who define children of immigrants as: either foreign born, or born in the United States with at least one foreign born parent.

There are limitations to applying such definitions. It is acknowledged that first and second generation immigrants often face varying circumstances, and there are dangers in applying certain characteristics to such a large and diverse group of individuals. This thesis does not claim or attempt to

address the issues of all children of immigrants. Instead, it uses commonalities existing within the populations to draw generalizations.

Although ECE can constitute education and care for children between the ages of 0 and 5 in California, this thesis deals specifically with children aged 3-4 years old, and ECE programs which provide care for children aged 3-4. The reasons for this are because ECE is not as common for children who are younger, and because much research existing within the field of ECE concerns children of this age. There are various types of ECE which will be discussed in the literature review section. However unless otherwise noted, when referring to ECE throughout this thesis, ECE is defined as; formal, center-based childcare and education for children of preschool age (3-4 years).

Although there are limits to exploring such a specific type of ECE, there are also benefits. This thesis does not claim or attempt to provide a full history and explanation of all forms of ECE. Instead, it looks at the type of ECE stated above in relation to the research questions. This way, a more comprehensive study can be provided. Distinctions will be made and definitions given throughout the thesis when necessary.

1.4 Structure of Thesis

The thesis begins with an introduction which presents the area of research, aim of the thesis, provides definitions for key terminology, and outlines the structure of the thesis. Following the introduction, the methods section describes the research methods used to complete the thesis, as well as limitations of the methods and thesis. After the methods section, a section about the theoretical framework provides theory from which the analysis will be completed. Inclusion and incorporation theories will be defined and explored and cultural diversity will be introduced. Following the theoretical framework section, a literature review is provided which includes sections on the population, ECE, and the benefits of ECE. These sections provide ground work for the following section, the analysis. The analysis is divided into two main sections. The first describes how ECE works in relation to the public program, Head Start, and analyzes ways in which Head Start has encouraged inclusion. The second section analyzes barriers inherent in the system and outside of it that impede immigrant inclusion. Following the analysis section, the conclusion summarizes the findings in relation to the research question and provides suggestion for further research.

2. Methods

This thesis uses secondary analysis to answer the research question. Secondary analysis is an analysis based on research and data collected by other researchers (Bryman 2012: p. 311). There are many reasons why the method of secondary analysis was chosen in order to answer this research question. Firstly, secondary analysis allows access to a wide range of high quality, varied data without the cost and time involved in primary analysis (Bryman 2012: p. 312). Secondly, this method allows for a longitudinal analysis (Bryman 2012: p. 313). Because the benefits of ECE over time are taken into consideration in this thesis, this type of method allows the use of existing longitudinal studies to gain knowledge which could not have been gathered primarily. Thirdly, secondary analysis offers the opportunity to reanalyze the existing data in a unique way (Bryman 2012: p. 315). In this thesis, existing data and research is used to analyze a specific case through a theoretical framework of inclusion and incorporation. This offers the potential to contribute new analysis to an existing body of research.

The research for this thesis will be gathered by means of a research overview based on text analysis of secondary data. The data was collected from books, journals, articles, and studies. The majority of articles and journals were found through Lund University's academic search databases. Because of the vast amount of research done within the fields of immigration, ECE, social policies and the Head Start program, the literature was methodically chosen to best fit the research questions. It would be impossible within the allotted space and time constraints to present a research overview of all research existing in the aforementioned fields. The research overview process included searching for key words in relation to the topic, reading numerous abstracts, and choosing those pieces of literature which were most related in regards to topic, geographical location, population, and time period. The literature was limited in order to maintain the focus of the thesis, despite the complexity of the topic. The thesis also uses more general literature concerning the population of study, the ECE system, and its benefits in order to give the reader broad descriptions so as to best depict the contemporary situation.

Gray literature such as NGO reports and findings from studies done by individual ECE centers is also used sparingly in conjunction with the above. Gray literature is appropriate for this thesis because of the lack of official statistics and information due to the sensitive nature of some of the issues such as immigration status. This thesis does not focus on irregular immigrants, but does take issues of irregular immigration into account. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, little official information can be found in relation to numbers of irregular immigrants and so, gray literature is used. It is necessary so that the extent to which issues of irregularity exist may be realized. Because public ECE programs do

not take into account immigration status, data concerning number of immigrants in such programs are often only collected by individual ECE centers. Because of the lack of longitudinal studies, those which are conducted by the centers can provide a more complete picture. Despite the limitations of such studies and data which will be discussed below, this type of literature is used sparingly in conjunction with official data and academic literature.

This thesis analyzes inclusion and exclusion through the focus on the study of a public program, Head Start. Though there are limitations in focusing on a single program, Head Start is the largest government low-income ECE program, which makes it an appropriate program for study. Because of the interest in inclusion, analyzing a public program can provide insight into how state policies shape inclusion. By keeping the study more focused, it can also offer more insight to the case than could be provided given a broad overview of all types of ECE provided in California.

This thesis does not seek to produce a numerical measurement of level of inclusion among children of immigrants. This is because the research question and aim demands an answer which identifies and analyzes the various ways in which children of immigrants are included, and the ways in which they are excluded from the system in terms of social aspects.

2.1 Limitations

There are limitations to the sole use of secondary data. Sources were not tailor-fit to meet the demands of the research questions (Bryman 2012: p. 324). Because of this, a large and diverse group of sources and data was explored in efforts to counteract the limitations. Because of the vast amount of existing literature, this thesis does provide a research overview of all previous research done in relation to the topic. Although this is a limitation, the thesis does not claim to provide an entire outlay of all existing research and should not be considered as such.

Because the data collected was all secondary in nature, the author of this thesis had no control over the quality of said data (Bryman 2012: p. 316). Despite this, access to larger and more diverse sources of data have allowed the researcher to pick and choose data not only according to content, but also according to level of quality. In this way, the researcher aims to counteract this limitation to the best of her ability.

There are limitations to the use of gray literature. In this case, the benefits outweigh the limitations because of the lack of dependable long term academic studies. Non-profits, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and ECE centers who have conducted their own research and studies are used to provide a more holistic view of the situation. Gray literature also allows for a more in depth account for irregular immigrants' patterns and even for patterns of regular immigrants who

avoid government contact for fear of repercussions. Because much of the research in the field of ECE is coming from those providing or advocating for ECE, there is the possibility of conflict. This work does not claim to be free of such literature, and instead, uses it cautiously to enhance understanding while entitling the reader to full disclosure. Gray literature is used sparingly and paired with numerous academic articles, journals, books and official data.

There are also limitations within the existing data which affect this thesis. In general, there is a lack of standard terminology, lack of state and national data collection system for ECE programs, lack of information pertaining to ethnic origin in relation to ECE programs, and lack of a standard measurement instrument for levels of quality within an ECE program (Takanishi 2004: p. 64). These limitations make clearly defining and analyzing the case more difficult. However, they are controlled by defining key words, using multiple data sources, and defining the current instruments of quality measurement.

While the aim of this study is to explore the inclusion and exclusion levels of children of immigrants from Mexico, data is used concerning both this specific group and that concerning children of immigrants in general. This is because of the lack of data available based on immigrant ethnicity. When referencing data specifically concerning immigrants of Mexico, the term 'children of Mexican immigrants' will be used. When referring to data concerning children of immigrants in general, the term 'children of immigrants' will be used.

These limitations of method and data play a role in shaping the content and direction of this thesis. Despite the aforementioned shortcomings involved with secondary analysis, the chosen method is the best fit in design with the research aim and structural constraints of the thesis. The research overview provides a generous background and explores the existing literature through second hand data, giving space for a critical analysis provided in the analysis section. In the concluding section, direction for further research is offered based on the findings of this thesis.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Inclusion and Incorporation

In this section, the theoretical framework on which the analysis will be based is examined. Theories pertaining to inclusion and incorporation are examined, and cultural diversity is presented in relation to the research question.

Although this thesis is concerned primarily with the incorporation of immigrants in a society, it is of value to keep in mind the various push and pull factors that cause immigrants to migrate because as immigrants become members of their new society, their needs and aspirations become a part of the needs and aspirations of society at large. (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 42). The push and pull factors existing between the US and Mexico are comparatively large (Massey et al. 2009: p. 73). This can present possibilities and problems for the state. The state can either see the different needs and aspirations of the migrants as competing with those of the rest of society and dismiss them, or it can work to include them. Excluding immigrants can lead to ethnic minorities who represent division and inequality. However, including immigrants can lead to the creation of ethnic communities who represent diversity, acceptance and equality in a multicultural society (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 34).

Excluding the incorporation of immigrants can lead to persistent inequality, conflict, and segregation. The role of the government in fostering incorporation is a developing idea (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 42). However, the state does play a role in inclusion and incorporation whether active or passive (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 274). Ideas about what inclusion should look like have changed over the years, and are different from state to state. Assimilation is a theory which was popular after the Second World War. It saw incorporation of immigrants as one sided. Immigrants were expected to adapt entirely to their new society (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 247). This theory however was replaced by theories of integration, which saw incorporation as a gradual process which would require some amount of mutual accommodation (Castles and Miller 200: p. 247). More recently, theories of multiculturalism, which contend that migrants should be able to participate as equals in all parts of society without giving up their own culture for the most part, have become more popular (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 248). As communities become more socially diverse, immigrants take on rolls in various politically, cultural and social groups (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 29).

3.2 Cultural Diversity

In the Unites States, a variant of multiculturalism, cultural diversity, is officially accepted (Castles and

Miller 2009: p. 248). Cultural diversity infers that migrants should have the ability to participate in all sectors of society without compromising their own cultures. However, this acceptance does not surpass the individualist mentality of the role of the state. The state is not seen as responsible to support social justice for minorities by fostering equality, changing institutions to better provide social services, or providing resources to ethnic minority organizations (Castles and Miller 2009 and Vertovek 1996: p. 49). Despite this, the government has historically played a role in shaping incorporation. Making it easier to obtain citizenship, political changes following the civil rights movement, and compulsory public school for all, regardless of immigration status, are example of ways in which the government has 'assisted' incorporation (Bass 2008: p. 133 and Castles and Miller 2009: p. 249). Policies which focus on achieving equal participation, representation, and opportunity for all groups in society can be seen as multicultural policies which encourage inclusion (Bass 2008: p. 134).

Since the 1980s however, government intervention such as anti-poverty measures has declined, which has led to increased inequality and segregation of ethnic groups (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 249). The increased politicization of the issues surrounding immigration have called into question the role of the state. Cultural diversity theory claims that immigrants can participate equally in all spheres of society. However, immigrants face many barriers, both in relation to state policy and infrastructure, and in relation to social and economic conditions which prohibit their ability to fully participate and be included in society.

Head Start is a public program which targets low-income families. Because of the significant number of immigrant families among the low-income population, Head Start can be seen as a means to inclusion of these children within the ECE system. However, Head Start does not focus on children of immigrants. There are many issues facing children of immigrants that are unique in nature, and which Head Start or social policies do not address. These inhibit their ability to access quality ECE and thus, participate equally in that sphere of society.

Inclusion is an important aspect of migration and immigration issues. The state's actions play a role, whether active or passive, in the inclusion of immigrants (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 34). The changing face of migration over the years, and changing theories about what incorporation and inclusion mean, and how best to accomplish them, have influenced the role of inclusion we see today in relation to immigrant incorporation. Although cultural diversity is accepted in the United States, the role that social policies and public programs play in promoting cultural diversity is evolving and often unclear. The extent of immigrant inclusion affects an individual's capabilities and opportunities, and affects the power relations between state and society, and the immigrant.

4. Literature Review

The following provides information concerning the population, a description of ECE, and a discussion of the benefits of ECE. Previous literature provides generous information regarding these topics which allows the ground work for later discussions of levels of immigrant inclusion in the ECE system. The following three sections are necessary to provide both ground and motivation for the research question. The first section examines how the children of Mexican immigrants and their families in California represent a distinct population. Although they represent a large and diverse group, generalization and commonalities can be found. This information is vital to the research question in order to examine characteristics which may play a role in inclusion in the ECE system and incorporation into society. In later analysis, the barriers specific to this population will be explored. The second section shows how the ECE system is defined, and describes it in brief. This is required to give a greater understanding to the research question. The final section discusses benefits and impacts of ECE. This section is necessary to demonstrate reasons why inclusion matters. It is necessary to show the benefits of ECE so that the question of inclusion has greater purpose.

4.1 Population Characteristics

This thesis analyzes the inclusion of children of immigrants from Mexico, aged 3-4, and their families in the ECE system. Children of immigrants are a growing population in California and are equipped with a unique set of circumstances. Relations between the state and immigrants, between society and immigrants, and between immigrants and each other, all contribute to the levels of inclusion within society, and within specific programs like ECE. It is important to understand the circumstances of the immigrant in order to understand the level of, and barriers to, inclusion.

According to the RAND California preschool study, 50 percent of preschool-age children in California are children of immigrants (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 74). Of these children of immigrants, at least 39 percent come from Mexico (Matthews and Ewen 2006: p. 11). Children of immigrants no longer represent a fringe group, or even a minority. Instead, over 20 million children throughout the US are children of immigrants (Capps et al. 2004). This thesis deals specifically with children of immigrants from Mexico to California. Mexican immigrants represent 44 percent of the immigrant population in California (Matthews and Ewen 2006: p. 21). These figures also do not fully account for irregular immigrants. Statistics aiming to account for irregular immigrants are lacking, however some studies measure as many as 11.4 million irregular immigrants in the US today, 6.7 million of which come from Mexico (Congregational Research Service 2012: p. 4).

93 percent of all children of immigrants are citizens (Capps et al. 2004: p. 35). Three quarters of

immigrant families with children are 'mixed status families', which have at least one citizen family member and one non-citizen or undocumented family member (Capps et al. 2004: p. 8). A non-citizen parent is an immigrant who is legally residing in the US but is not a citizen, while an undocumented parent is an immigrant who is there illegally, having overstayed a visa or entered illegally and is also referred to as an irregular immigrant. While at least 81 percent of children live with at least one non-citizen parent, one third of children of immigrants who are under six live with at least one undocumented parent (Capps et al. 2004: p. 7).

Children of Mexican immigrants represent a unique group not just among natives, but among other immigrants. They are more likely to have an undocumented parent than other immigrants, and more likely to have two foreign-born parents (Capps et al. 2004: p. 9). They are also more likely to have a larger network within the US, and are more likely to live in a two parent household (Takanishi 2004: p. 64). Over half of children of immigrants are low-income, and this statistic rises when factors such as being a non-citizen, lack of English language fluency, or being undocumented are accounted for (Capps et al. 2004: p. 12). These statistics are vital in defining the population because they affect a child's ability to access the benefits to which he/she is entitled as a citizen. Because of the status of a parent, fears, and other barriers, children who have the right to social services often go without (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 90). This affects the population's ability to be fully included in the system, regardless of the legal right to be included. Because Mexican immigrants are socioeconomically disadvantaged, the ability to utilize the ECE system as a tool for improving these conditions is essential (Crosnoe 2007: p. 153).

The population of this study resides in California. Because each state is unique in its child policies, narrowing the population to that of a single state can produce a deeper analysis (Takanishi 2004: p. 62). California is one of the states with the largest Mexican immigrant populations (Capps et al. 2004: p. 5). Immigration has become a central political issue and because of the high number of immigrants, California has much to gain or lose from changes in social policies which affect immigrants, and the extent to which they are included in society, through institutions such as ECE.

4.2 Defining ECE

Karoly and Gonzalez (2011) note that ECE has, in recent years, been recognized by both researchers and policy makers for its importance in promoting cognitive, social and physical development among those of preschool-age. They also discuss the surge in support of ECE policies in recent years and attribute it, for the most part, to brain research which has demonstrated its importance in the first few years of life among children with regards to cognitive, social, physical and emotional health (Karoly

and Gonzalez 2011: p. 72). In this section, ECE is defined and explained.

There are two main types of ECE or 'early child care' for children ages 3-4. The first is informal care which includes parental care, care from a babysitter, or care from a relative. This thesis does not address informal care. Instead, this thesis is interested in the formal care settings. This refers to center based programs that along side care, focus on learning and development (Crosnoe 2007: p. 156). 71 percent of all children in the US are in formal center based ECE care at age 3 and 4 (Capps et al. 2004). These centers differ from informal care in that they generally are supervised by trained staff, have access to education material and involve not only adult-peer, but also peer-peer interactions (Crosnoe 2007: p. 156). There is consensus among researchers, policy makers and practitioners that children in formal ECE programs (especially among those deemed high quality) perform better in regards to reading, cognitive skills, as well as other indicators than do children who have received informal care (Crosnoe 2007: p. 157). While private formal center-based ECE is available, the average annual cost for a four year old to attend in California is 8,237 USD, and is often higher for younger children (Childcare Aware, 2012). Because this cost makes up 35 percent of the income of a family of four living at the federal poverty line, and because a high volume of children of Mexican immigrants live below the poverty line, private ECE is not an option for many immigrant families. Most research done in the field of ECE is done in the formal, center-based setting. Because this thesis aims to analyze the extent of immigrant inclusion, it will focus on formal ECE center-based programs, specifically the federally funded Head Start program.

One way ECE programs are divided is by quality. Some programs are referred to as high quality and these programs have been shown to offer the greatest overall benefits. Mathews and Ewen (2006) show that the quality of the program is the most important factor in a young child's development. There are multiple ways of measuring quality of ECE programs. One way is through the Early Childhood Environments Rating Scale Revised (ECERS-R). This scale takes into account 43 elements of the program including those relating to the space, staff, routines, educating materials and activities, and assigns the program a number in relation to the determined quality (Clifford and Reszka, 2010). Another common measure is the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS), which also measures according to various indicators deemed most important (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 79). A third and common way to measure quality is by combining indicators such as; student to teacher ratio and level of education among the teachers, group sizes, and access to more comprehensive services such as health and nutrition (Mathews and Ewen, 2006). Capps et al. (2004) point out that although high quality programs have become central instruments in conducting the most beneficial types of

ECE, the idea of quality has still not been universally defined.

Although the idea of high quality is an ever developing concept, research shows that levels of quality in a program are important to outcomes. Takanishi (2004) states that among the studies done on quality measurement, there is a consensus that the following indicators play a role in determining high quality; extended exposure, educational services paired with the development characteristics of the children, teachers with a 4 year education who are more well compensated, smaller class sizes and parental involvement (Takanishi 2004: p. 64). Because of this, this thesis will include issues of quality despite the evolving definition of the concept. When referring to 'high quality', unless otherwise noted, it will be in relation to programs which are defined as high quality by one of the above four described measurements. Further definition and explanation will be provided when necessary. It is important to acknowledge that these differences can affect many aspects of ECE, including the potential benefits to the individual and to others. Throughout this thesis high quality ECE is referred to and there are multiple reasons for this. First, studies show that high quality programs offer increased benefits to individuals and to other beneficiaries. Second, research shows that certain demographic and geographic populations are more likely than others to receive high quality ECE. Third, in determining levels of inclusion, it is necessary to compare state programs provided for low-income families to other programs and discuss their similarities and differences in relation to quality.

ECE has become an integral part of the US education system and a reflection of society at large. The growing acceptance and promotion of ECE as a method of child development by practitioners, beneficiaries, politicians, researchers and policy makers emphasizes the direction of ECE. In the 2013 State of the Union, President Barack Obama proposed to make high quality ECE available to every child in America. He pointed to the long term investment benefits, citing that for every one dollar put into the ECE system, the US would save seven dollars down the road (Obama, 2013). He cited long term impacts such as reduced teen pregnancy, increased graduation rates, reduced crime rates, and increased skill and job opportunity as societal arguments for increasing the funding to, and the quality of, the country's ECE system (Obama, 2013).

ECE is regarded by some researchers as a tool capable of providing a leveling system. It may represent a mechanism to further inclusion and opportunity among disadvantaged children, and a way to decrease perpetual poverty and cycles of poor education and low income that are attributed to various demographic populations. Children of Mexican immigrants are an at risk population who often fall within these bounds. The following section outlines the ways in which ECE can impact an individual, their family, and their society at large.

4.3 Benefits of ECE- Why it Matters

Research has shown that there are numerous reasons why enrollment in ECE matters. In this section, the direct benefits to the child are discussed, followed by benefits reaching beyond the individual. It is necessary to examine the possible benefits in order to give motivation for inclusion of immigrants in the system. For those who can and do attend quality ECE programs, there exist a number of benefits and impacts. This section details those impacts, and discusses the importance of the level of quality of the ECE program in relation to said benefits.

Benefits to the Child Immigrant

There are many ways in which a child's attendance in ECE programs can benefit them. Research has found many direct impacts which positively affect a child's school readiness, cognitive abilities, language levels, behavioral qualities, aptitude, and social and physical abilities (Karoly and Gonzalez, 2011 and Barnett and Belfield, 2006).

Despite a a shortage of research detailing long-term impacts of ECE, existing studies have reached consensus on a number of long-term impacts of ECE (Barnett and Belfield 2006: p. 83). High school graduation rates are higher in students who attended a high quality ECE program (Barnett and Belfield, 2006 and Karoly and Gonzalez, 2011). Other long term impacts that have been seen in children attending high quality ECE programs include; higher earning, decreased use of welfare, and lower crime rates (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 81). Reduced teen pregnancy is also found in children who have attended high quality ECE programs (Barnett and Belfield: 2006: p. 88).

School readiness is another commonly cited benefit of ECE. Compared to children who attend an informal ECE or childcare setting, children attending high quality ECE programs are significantly more likely to be 'school ready' (Crosnoe 2007: p. 173). Although being school ready may appear to be a short term impact, Takanishi (2004) explains, '...skills at the entry to Kindergarten predict a child's educational achievements in third grade, and achievement at the end of third grade can predict their future by predicting future educational success which is an indicator of post-secondary education, and future income security' (Takanishi 2004: p. 63). Because children of Mexican immigrants are more likely than natives, or other immigrants to be in informal care, they face repercussions from not being 'school ready' which can translate to long term disadvantages (Crosnoe 2007: p. 173). Crosnoe (2007) states that if the current challenge of countering Mexican-immigrant under-performance in schools can be met, then the educational system can be used as a mechanism of social mobility for children of Mexican immigrants (Crosnoe 2007: p. 152). ECE may provide such a solution. The importance of social mobility for immigrants is high, and Barnett and Belfield (2006) argue that increasing

investment in ECE has the potential to raise a child's social mobility. Their ability to be incorporated into a society, and not just a certain segment of society, relates to a person's ability to experience equal opportunities and capabilities.

It is important to note that the level of quality of the ECE is important to the potential benefits. Though researchers debate how to define high quality ECE, there is consensus that quality matters. High quality programs have shown to provide significantly higher benefits to the child in multiple sectors. Barnett and Belfield (2006) studied differences in outcomes between high quality and non-high quality programs. They found that children who attended standard center-based ECE programs as opposed to informal ECE showed improved cognitive ability, including increased IQ, and positive effects on self-esteem, motivation and social behavior. (Barnett and Belfield 2006: p. 81). Those who attended high quality programs saw higher cognitive, language and behavior scores than those in standard ECE center-based programs (Barnett and Belfield 2006: p. 82).

ECE programs, especially those deemed high quality, have the potential to lessen the existing gaps between children of immigrants and their native counterparts. It is clear that though ECE presents opportunities for individual benefits to children of immigrants, the quality of the program plays a fundamental role in determining the potential for benefits. The type of ECE that is available to immigrant families affects their ability to be included in the benefits which quality ECE has to offer.

Benefits Beyond the Individual

Arguments for increasing the availability and quality of ECE programs cite benefits beyond the individual. For one, the family unit may also realize gains from the enrollment of their child in an ECE program. Secondly, as macro-level benefits have been found when increasing level of enrollment and quality of institutions in upper level education, there is now research that shows benefits to the community and state which come from increasing participation in, and quality of, ECE programs.

The family of the child who is attending a quality ECE program can benefit from said program. High quality programs, often those which are small-scale in nature, sometimes offer secondary benefits. Examples of these are investment in the child's health, parenting classes, English-language classes for the parents, and sometimes assistance with job searching (Károly and Gonzalez, 2011). These benefits go beyond those which directly benefit the attending child.

There are also less obvious forms of benefit to the parents. The school may provide an opportunity for safe engagement and social interaction for the parents (Károly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 84). Immigrant parents may experience fear, distrust, or wariness of institutions more so than other parents. By exposing these parents to a continuously safe and inviting environment, the ability to create

social ties may be more easily recognized (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 85). Also, by exposing parents to norms of school procedure in ECE programs, the transition to the next levels of education may be less daunting. The above benefits to the family show that inclusion of children of immigrants not only affects the incorporation of the child, but of the family as well.

While politicians debate the role of the state in providing ECE, there are a number of arguments and statistics which seek to illuminate the ways in which communities and the state at large can benefit from investment in, and attention to, quality ECE programs. Statistics such as lower crime rates, lower teen pregnancy, and a more educated population among those attending quality ECE programs, have benefits to the community at large. Heckman (2009) discusses that economically speaking, there are greater gains to be made from early intervention in disadvantaged children than in intervention later on. Investment in high quality ECE holds the greatest potential return (Heckman 2009: p. 52). He sites that investment in high quality ECE can do more for the children, and for society than can schooling and job training later in the child's life (Heckman, 2009).

Barnett and Belfield (2006) discuss how quality ECE can act in the long term to reduce disparities and increase the standard of living among immigrant groups (Barnett and Belfield 2006: p. 74). In this way, the macro-benefits of ECE can be a tool in decreasing economic inequalities which lead to divided societies and persistent marginalization. This benefits not only the individuals, but the society at large. Less conflict, greater equality and diminished marginalization can contribute to a more harmonious and prosperous society.

4.4 Summary

The literature review has described the population of study and described ECE, and its benefits. Whether or not immigrants are included in high quality ECE programs can determine their future opportunities. Exclusion from such benefits can encourage circular patterns of inequality which promote a segregated and uneven society. Takanishi (2004) states that when immigrants cannot access the same quality ECE programs as natives, '...the entire society suffers from the loss of their human capital, creativity and productivity as family members, workers, and community members' (Takanishi 2004: p. 62). Castles and Miller (2009) discuss the backlash in recent years towards the idea of multiculturalism, or cultural diversity, which is caused by the increasing awareness of the persistent marginalization and social disadvantages faced by immigrant groups (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 275). Access to instrumental programs, such as ECE which have the potential to counteract these social disadvantages can be a powerful tool in inclusion of immigrants.

5. Analysis

The following will study the ECE system in California through role and design of the public program, Head Start, and the ways in which it has supported inclusion, followed by an analysis of the barriers which prevent inclusion. In this section, the research question is answered through analysis of literature and theory.

5.1 ECE in California and Efforts Towards Inclusion

ECE in California and the Head Start Program

Although there are multiple options for ECE care in California including private, and informal care, this thesis focuses on Head Start, the largest federally funded program that aims to provide ECE for low-income families. This is because in efforts to examine inclusion and exclusion, the evolving social policies play a distinct role in the affordability, availability, and quality of ECE. This thesis focuses on a program which aims to incorporate low-income groups, in order to analyze the extent to which inclusion has been successful, and to identify the barriers which impede inclusion. In this section, the Head Start program is discussed and analyzed in relation to ideas and theoretical concepts of inclusion and incorporation.

The role of the state is an ever developing concept that shapes the availability, affordability, and design of institutions like ECE. Head Start is a federally funded ECE program which has been around since the 1960s, and which targets low-income families through means-tested income requirements. Head Start aims to enhance cognitive, social and emotional development in children from birth to age five through providing; education, health, nutrition and social services to children and their families (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). Most commonly, Head Start funding is delivered to center based programs. (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). Head Start funded programs go beyond minimum care and education, and implement a more comprehensive approach to ECE. Through the provision of high quality care and education, nutrition services, health services such as medical or dental check ups for children, and social services such as classes for parents, Head Start aims to target disadvantaged children and provide them with beneficial ECE. These targeted approaches seek to include those who would be left out had the provision of ECE been left up to market forces.

Head Start is available to low-income families who meet the federally regulated income requirements. In 2013, a family of four must make under 23, 550 USD per year to qualify (California Head Start Association, 2013). More than one quarter of all children of immigrants live under the

poverty line, and qualify for the program (Matthews and Ewen 2006: p. 11). This number is higher among children with non-citizen or undocumented parents. Because Head Start does not take immigration status or citizenship into account, these children should be able to access Head Start programs (Matthews and Ewen 2006: p. 11). However, fewer immigrants participate in Head Start than are eligible (Takanishi 2004: p. 65). Qualifying children of immigrants are 20 percent less likely than qualifying children of natives to participate (Matthews and Ewen 2006: p. 11).

Head Start provides funds to local grantees, who provide center based ECE services under the guidelines and minimum requirements set forth by Head Start. Although Head Start may provide up to 80 percent of funding, the grantee must supply at least 20 percent. The amount of funding provided by Head Start differs from center to center, with some centers fund-raising the majority of their financial needs. Head Start has strict regulations as to teacher's education level, class sizes, and inclusive care for disabled and homeless children. Although there are many regulations, Head Start programs can differ greatly depending on the center's level of quality. This is one of the reasons that results of Head Start programs regarding impacts to the child's development have been debated. While some Head Start funded programs have been deemed successful, others have been reported as failures for their inability to provide long term impacts. The level of quality of the individual program plays a significant role in these findings. Not every Head Start funded program offers the same level of quality as the next.

Head Start and Inclusion of Children of Immigrants

In this section, the thesis will analyze ways in which Head Start has been successful in including children of immigrants. Although Head Start is not a program which is targeted at immigrants, but instead low-income families, it has developed over the years to provide more inclusive policies and program designs for children of immigrants. Certain Head Start program centers has been deemed successful in multiple instances for their ability to close the gaps that exists in cognitive, social, and behavioral indicators that determine school readiness. Because of its efforts towards incorporation of low-income families into ECE programs, many of whom would otherwise go without formal ECE center-based care, have received it. Longitudinal studies of certain high quality Head Start funded programs show the potential of the Head Start program to promote child development for children of all backgrounds and circumstances. In this section, there will be a discussion of these programs in relation to aspects which foster inclusion.

Head Start is a program whose goal is to provide a service to low-income families that would have gone without such provision otherwise. The idea of such a program relies on the theoretical understanding that incorporation of all people into society benefits society as a whole. Despite the

conservative, market-based approach to the welfare state which the US state often relies on, this program represents the recognition that certain aspects of government engagement are beneficial. Without the Head Start program, society may become more segregated as those who could not afford private ECE care would lose out on the benefits which it could offer. Although the Head Start program does not target immigrants, many immigrants benefit from the policies which allow for the participation of all low-income children, regardless of citizenship or immigration status. Incorporation addresses how immigrants become a part of their new society (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 245). Programs such as Head Start can foster such incorporation as they increase the availability of opportunity for immigrants by bridging existing achievement gaps between native and immigrant children (Takanishi 2004: p. 65).

The lack of required citizenship or immigration status to access Head Start programs is the clearest way in which Head Start has included children of immigrants. Research shows that over a quarter of all children of immigrants are low-income, and because Head Start cannot legally be denied on the basis of citizenship, children of all immigration statuses who meet the income requirements can apply (Matthews and Ewen 2006: p. 15). The inability to deny a child the right to education based on their immigration status can promote a more inclusive society, and discourage circular poverty nourished by inequality and segregation. In this way, Head Start policies promote cultural diversity and equal access regardless of status.

Aside from the structural policies that allow for immigrants to access Head Start, there exist a number of attributes in program design in Head Start funded programs that foster inclusion. While not every Head Start center provides a high degree of these services and benefits for lack of funding, those that do are examples of the potential that Head Start holds in regards to inclusion of children of immigrants. Certain high quality Head Start programs go beyond the minimum requirements and provide extensive care and education services which can increase the inclusion of children of immigrants. Many centers require a percentage of their teachers to speak two languages. The availability of Spanish speaking staff can foster inclusion of children of Mexican immigrants. Since children of Mexican immigrants are significantly more likely to have parents who are not fluent in English, the availability of Spanish speaking teachers affects a child's ability to be included in the system, and gain from it all that a child from an English speaking family would. Some programs offer bilingual instruction which can benefit the children of Mexican immigrants by promoting both English and the language spoken at home, and can have long-term benefits to a child's cognitive development (Károly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 84). Another way Head Start programs increase inclusion is by

providing family support. This can include language or parenting classes for parents, and help with job-seeking (Takanishi 2004: p. 65). High quality programs may also provide extensive health and nutrition services to the attending children. Because health among children of immigrants is lower than children of natives, quality nutrition services can greatly benefit immigrants (Capps et al. 2004: p. 25). Centers that provide such services, paired with highly-educated teachers, low student-teacher ratios, and other high quality indicators have the potential to more easily promote inclusion of children of immigrants. Such centers can be examples of the potential Head Start has concerning inclusion of children of immigrants.

Creating a community that is safe, welcoming, attentive and adaptive to the needs of immigrants is a factor in incorporation and inclusion. Immigrants who do not feel safe or welcome into certain sectors of society are not fully included in them, and segmented society persists. By providing such services, these ECE programs have fostered inclusion. While the legal acceptance of immigrants regardless of immigration status into ECE programs contributes to inclusion, the policy alone does not provide an inclusive system. The above program designs and services work to include immigrants not just in theory but in reality as well. They take into account the unique needs and barriers facing children of immigrants and attempt to lessen them in order to allow children of immigrants to be included in ECE and access the benefits which it can provide.

The state plays an important role in immigrant incorporation. State policies can foster incorporation, or contribute to the persistence of inequality and segregation. Head Start, though not directed specifically at children of immigrants but at children of low-income families, provides the opportunity to increase inclusion in many ways. Without the Head Start program, low-income families, many of whom are immigrant families, would have less options in terms of access to quality ECE. Certain Head Start Funded programs whose benefits go beyond the minimum requirements show the potential for such centers. While this section has addressed the ways in which Head Start has fostered inclusion, the next section presents barriers existing which impede the inclusion of children of immigrants in the system.

5.2 Barriers to Inclusion

The above section highlighted several ways in which the state is working to raise inclusion and promote high quality ECE for many. Although the above examples represent progress towards inclusion, there are still many barriers, and limits to the inclusion of children of immigrants that can occur. Although participation in ECE programs designed to accommodate disadvantaged children, such as Head Start, could help reduce gaps, children of disadvantaged immigrant families are less likely to

participate in such programs (Takanishi 2004: p. 61). Moreover, gaps in participation between immigrants and natives are largest in states such as California with the highest immigrant populations (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 73).

Castles and Miller (2009) claim that the state derives its legitimacy from claims that it can provide order and security, and that it represents the aspirations of the people. Immigrants, however, represent a culturally diverse people who make the idea of a cultural homogeneity that shares characteristics and aspirations a greater struggle (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 42). Although it is more complex to provide for a diverse group with diverse needs and aspirations, there is a need to incorporate all members of society so that inequality, conflict, and segregation do not persist. The following barriers and limits to inclusion in ECE programs present an obstruction to incorporation and have the possibility to perpetuate inequalities.

Children of Mexican immigrants are more likely to have parents without high levels of education, and who have limited English proficiency (Capps et al. 2004: p. 17). They are among the least likely of any group, immigrants or native, to participate in formal ECE programs (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 73). Among low-income children, immigrants are significantly less likely than native children to be enrolled in formal ECE (Capps et al. 2004: p. 30). They are more likely to be in informal, or parental care (Crosnoe 2007: p. 168). There is a lack of understanding into the reasons for this, but the barriers addressed in this section provide an analysis of the difficulties children of immigrants have in accessing quality ECE which may affect their levels of inclusion. This section is necessary to identify and analyze the ways in which children of immigrants are not being included.

This section details the barriers facing children of immigrants from Mexico which work to hinder the accessibility, quality, and impacts of ECE. While some barriers are direct results of structural inequalities, there are a number of other barriers which impede inclusion in the ECE system. Below, structural barriers are discussed followed by economic and labor market barriers, language and information related barriers, barriers specific to undocumented and non-citizen immigrants, barriers relating to fear, and barriers in relation to the quality of the available ECE programs.

Structural Barriers

Although the previous section on achievements and examples has shown that the state has made strides in providing ECE for many, including children of Mexican immigrants, there are still barriers which are structural in nature and prevent all of these children from being fully included in the ECE system. First, there are not enough spaces as there is need in Head Start programs (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 87). In 2004, only half of the eligible children participated in the program due to lack of space (Takanishi

2004: p. 67). In areas where low-income and immigrant populations are high, so is the demand for Head Start, and there are often waiting lists. Funding issues limit the role that Head Start programs can play (Takanishi 2004: p. 67). Because most immigrant families who are left out of Head Start programs are unable to afford other options, they are excluded from the benefits which formal center-based ECE can provide.

Second, children of Mexican immigrants face structural barriers relating service access such as health care, food stamps, welfare and other services. Children of immigrants are more than twice as likely than natives to be uninsured (Capps et al. 2004: p. 24). Because of recent budget cuts, programs that were intended to provide health programs to disadvantaged children have recently been cut back (Takanishi 2004: p. 63). Lack of access to health care can hinder not only a child's ability to attend ECE, but her ability to live a healthy life. Families with younger children are more likely to have entered the US after 1996, when legislation was enacted excluding immigrants from receiving many previously available public benefits (Takanishi 2004: p. 65). While the law was intended to encourage foreign residents to apply for naturalization, it has contributed to a sharp divide in welfare accessibility between citizens and non-citizens (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 249).

Third, Head Start is targeted in nature. Some argue that the limited amount of public resources should be focused on those who are deemed most in need. But the funding issues have made clear the difficulties in providing these services to all who are deemed eligible (Takanishi 2004: p. 70). Others argue that a universal approach could further both social and economic integration as opposed to ethnic grouping (Takanishi 2004: p. 66). A more universal approach could foster greater support and increase funding and quality which could benefit children of immigrants. Near poor and working poor are not eligible for public programs and are often not able to spend the required income to pay for private child care (Takanishi 2004: p. 67). While a universal approach could enhance overall inclusion, the state's strict targeted approaches to Head Start and other welfare services remain strong.

Overall, while Head Start has contributed to inclusion in policies and practice, there are still many structural barriers inherent within the ECE system and state social policies which present a challenge to immigrant inclusion. While the state's take on cultural diversity dictates that the state is not responsible to work for social justice, individuals and society at large are affected by lack of inclusion efforts.

Economic and Labor Market Barriers

Families of Mexican immigrants are disproportionately represented among the poor (Takanishi 2004: p. 62). The average hourly wage for native parents of young children is 17 USD per hour, while for

immigrants it is 13 USD per hour (Capps et al. 2004: p. 16). They are more likely to face food hardship and crowded housing (Capps et al 2004: p. 22). Low-income families have fewer options for ECE. These factors all play into an immigrant's ability to access ECE. Income, shelter and food all represent basic human needs. When basic needs are in jeopardy, concerns about education and child care are secondary.

Mexican immigrants generally enter into lower segments of society (Crosnoe 2007: p. 154). They are more likely to have irregular employment (Karoly and Gonzalez, 2011). Irregular employment generally pays less and provides less security than does regular employment. Irregular employment may also have longer, or more unique hours making dropping off and picking up a child at school on time difficult or impossible. The percentage of children of Mexican immigrants who are poor is rising (Takanishi 2004: p. 62). While inclusion fosters economic development, exclusion and inability to access ECE can perpetuate circular poverty and increase gaps to contribute to a more segregated society.

Language and Information Barriers

Barriers relating to language and information may prevent immigrants otherwise capable of accessing the ECE system from doing so. The ECE system is complex and accessing programs such as Head Start can be difficult, confusing, and time consuming.

First, language is key. Because 58 percent of children of immigrants have at least one parent who is limited in English proficiency, finding information, filling out forms, asking questions, and understanding how the system works can be difficult or impossible (Capps et al 2004: p. 18). Children of Mexican immigrants are more likely than other immigrants to have parents who do not speak English (Mathews and Ewen 2006: p. 15). While some centers offer English and Spanish forms and staff, others are limited.

Second, information and lack of information can be seen as a barrier. Paperwork, waiting lists, and complex bureaucratic systems may be very different from what a recently immigrated family is used to (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 87). The complexity of the structure of the systems can be difficult to navigate for anyone. For those coming from another country, or speaking a different language, it can impede a child's ability to access the system.

Thirdly, there is a lack of research and understanding into whether or not immigrants access ECE differently from natives. When migrants move to a new society, they often rely on a series of connections or networks to support them. Because the state does not always provide all which an immigrant needs, and society may look different than it did in the sending country, migrant groups

often develop their own forms of economic and social infrastructure (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 29). Some argue that research into how people choose child care options needs to be reexamined. Takanishi (2004) discusses the call to look at historical, and contextual factors as well as family socialization patterns that influence what the networks surrounding the families look like (Takanishi 2004: p. 66). Because the most common way to choose an ECE program is through word of mouth, the networks around the child that may be available instead of formal care services play an important role (Karoly and Gonzalez, 2011). Barriers relating to language and information present a challenge to accessing ECE for children of Mexican immigrants. While cultural diversity theory would say that immigrants can exist and prosper in a society without giving up their own culture or language, these barriers make that prosperity more challenging (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 248).

Barriers Facing Undocumented Immigrants

Although this thesis does not focus on undocumented workers, it is important to note their unique barriers because of the high-levels of undocumented immigrants from Mexico in California. Although most children of Mexican immigrants are citizens, the immigration status of the parents also plays a role in a child's inclusion in the ECE system.

Massey et al. (2009) discusses how in neo-classical migration terms, there are many incentives for migration from Mexico to the United States (Massey et al. 2009: p. 73). There are numerous push-pull factors which contribute to immigration from Mexico to the US. Among them are the wage differentials, and the demand for agricultural workers (Massey et al. 2009: p. 74). Although statistics are difficult to find because of their nature, it is estimated that there are 6.7 million undocumented immigrants from Mexico living in the US today (Congregational Research Service 2012: p. 4). These immigrants face a greater set of barriers to attaining ECE. Children who are foreign-born are more likely to be low-income than those who are born in the US (Capps et al. 2004: p. 12). Most undocumented immigrants are ineligible for almost all public benefits (Capps et al. 2004: p. 12). One third of children of immigrants live with at least one undocumented parent (Capps et al. 2004: p. 7). While Head Start does not take immigration status into account in determining eligibility, undocumented workers often work outside the formal labor market, which makes providing proof of income eligibility difficult or impossible (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 86). Lack of access to health services, and other welfare services may play a role in the immigrant family's ability to access and perform in ECE. Even if a child is a citizen, an undocumented parent can affect a child's ability to access to system.

Fear Related Barriers

Undocumented workers are not the only group to face issues directly relating to immigration or citizenship status. Non-citizens, who are legally in the country, face barriers which are related to fear and uncertainty. Despite the fact that Head Start and other public programs which provide services for the poor are open to most legal immigrants, immigrants access these programs less than they are legally allowed. Immigrants may believe they are ineligible for programs such as Head Start (Mathew and Ewen 2006: p. 13). Others fear the repercussions for receiving state aid before becoming citizens (Capps et al. 2004: p. 7). Because relying on the state is frowned upon and can in certain circumstances, affect one's ability to gain citizenship, many immigrants determine that they cannot apply for programs such as Head Start or other social services. Children who have one or more undocumented parents may abstain from attending ECE for fear of the undocumented parent's deportation (Capps et al. 2004: p. 7). While these barriers are often barriers of misconception, they play an important role in a child's ability to obtain ECE. When immigrants are fearful of accessing services to which they are entitled, they have less opportunities than a native who is not fearful of accessing such services. The ability to become a citizen is a crucial part of the incorporation process (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 268). When this ability is, or is assumed to be threatened, immigrant incorporation is threatened as well.

Barriers once in ECE

Barriers preventing access to ECE are not the only challenge facing children of immigrants from utilizing the ECE system in the same way as natives. Once in an ECE program, the type of program matters. It determines the benefits which can be gained. This section studies how once included in an ECE program, inclusion is not complete.

Although Head Start offers high quality programs, the quality of the average Head Start program is below many small-scale, private high quality programs (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 81). Because of this, research on long term benefits to Head Start children falls short when compared to other high quality programs. The benefits seen from the small-scale high quality programs are difficult to replicate on a large scale (Karoly and Gonzalez 2011: p. 82). Funding and the targeted nature of the Head Start program may contribute to the difficulties in gaining enough support to implement changes that would improve the quality. Although Head Start has regulations such as class sizes, student to teacher ratio, and teacher training, they are not as strict as those at many small-scale private ECE providers (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). While some specific Head Start funded program centers have smaller class sizes, lower student to teacher ratios, and more educated

teachers, many program centers have high demand and lack of funding, and provide only the minimum requirements. Barnett and Belfield (2006) discuss how the overall quality in public programs such as Head Start is generally lower than that of private and small-scale programs. In the literature review section it was made clear that the level of quality impacts the potential benefits from the program. When children of immigrants are generally exposed to programs of a lesser quality than are native children, the immigrants are denied the possibility to gain the same benefits as are the native children. When children of immigrants have less opportunity than children of natives, incorporation and inclusion only go so far. Gaps persist when opportunities are unequal.

5.3 Summary

The above has provided an analysis of the workings of the Head Start program in relation to inclusion, and the barriers and challenges which children of Mexican immigrants face in attaining such inclusion. While Head Start does have certain policies and designs that promote inclusion, the program does not actively target children of immigrants as would multicultural policies. Despite the inclusion that existing policies and designs foster, there are still a great number of barriers and challenges that are not provided for. Because of this, children of immigrants are more often excluded from accessing the benefits which quality ECE can offer. Denial of such benefits has the ability to perpetuate existing gaps and inequalities. The acceptance of cultural diversity insinuates that immigrants should be able to participate in all spheres of society as equal members, but the state hold no responsibility in working towards such goals (Castles and Miller: 2009: p. 247). The above barriers show that such equality of participation is unlikely without state involvement.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Extent of Inclusion and Exclusion

Children of Mexican immigrants represent a unique and evolving group whose inclusion in the ECE system in California plays a role in immigrant incorporation into society. This thesis has demonstrated that quality ECE programs have many potential benefits. While the Head Start program is a public targeted program, it targets all low-income children, not specifically the children of immigrants. While many children of immigrants benefit from such a program, they also face challenges and barriers to an extent that native children do not. Because of this, their ability to access, and utilize the California ECE system is compromised.

Today, neoliberal influenced economic policies encourage greater wage disparities and reduce the capacity of the state to redistribute welfare services that would benefit the poor and disadvantaged (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 275). The US does not officially provide multicultural social policies, which would provide immigrant specific services. Instead, these types of policies are seen as unnecessary government intervention (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 262). However, history has shown that in the US, policies have been put in place to benefit marginalized groups specifically. Affirmative action, anti-discrimination measures, and equal opportunity measures all were state enacted policies and laws to benefit marginalized groups (Castles and Miller 2009: p. 262). While Head Start does not target or provide special services for immigrants, it has in many ways, sought policies and designs to include children of immigrants in its system. Inclusive policies, like those which do not account for immigration status as criteria for eligibility, create a more inclusive system. Certain centers have provided additional support which is specific to children of immigrants. Although these centers are less common, their designs can be seen as conducive to inclusion of children of immigrants, and they can be seen as examples of how Head Start funded programs can better contribute to the inclusion of children of immigrants in the ECE system.

These inclusion measures do not counter all of the challenges facing children of Mexican immigrants in accessing, and fully utilizing the ECE system. While structural, economic, language and informational, immigration status related, and fear related barriers hinder an immigrants ability to access to ECE system, barriers relating to quality of available programs hinder their ability to profit from the system in the same way native children do.

Overall, while public programs, such as Head Start, can foster inclusion of children of immigrants to a certain extent, they do not actively promote policies to target immigrant groups. The

numerous barriers present a problem for immigrant inclusion in the ECE system. Lack of inclusion in one sphere of society, such as ECE, can promote societal inequality and segregation. While the state disregards such barriers, the power relations between the state and immigrants are affected. Without equal power, children of immigrants may be more limited in their opportunities and capabilities. The idea of cultural diversity relies on the claim that immigrants have the ability to participate equally. Although Head Start has provided policies, and certain centers have actively promoted the inclusion of immigrants, the ECE in California is, on the whole, more accessible and available to children of natives than it is to children of immigrants. This fact makes the promotion of cultural diversity a greater challenge.

6.2 Call for Further Research

With the recent politicization of ECE and its issues, questions about quality and access have been brought to focus. However, there are still areas which have yet to be fully explored by researchers. Research centering on the analysis of specific ECE programs and centers which have been more successful in including immigrants could provide guidance in determining if and how such policies and practices can be duplicated on a larger scale, in order to provide more far reaching impacts. More research is still needed to examine the impacts on those who are left out of the system, especially those who are already disadvantaged, such as the children of immigrants. Regulation of terminology and evaluation protocol within the ECE system is necessary. Determining quality of program is vital, and a more universal quality regulation system could be of benefit. There is also a lack of research into how immigrants want to experience ECE. Research into how immigrants experience, access, and use the system can provide for greater overall inclusion. The growing political debate about the government role in providing ECE can be seen as advantageous, in that it sheds light on a subject which has the potential to modify existing exclusionary structures within society and provide greater inclusion, potentially benefiting numerous children of immigrants, their families, and society.

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